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## **Superintendent Debbie Critchfield Addresses House, Senate Education Committees on Reducing Federal Bureaucracy in Public Education**

(BOISE) – Superintendent Debbie Critchfield presented a plan to the House and Senate Education Committees Monday to apply for waivers that would grant federal flexibility and reduce administrative red tape in public education. The Department’s federal flexibility proposals are currently [out for public comment](#), with the comment window closing soon.

The proposal follows recent guidance from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) encouraging states to seek waivers that shift greater decision-making authority to state and local education leaders. Last April, the ED invited states to explore flexibility options designed to “free schools from bureaucratic red tape,” and better align federal requirements with local student achievement goals.

Idaho’s waiver requests are the result of months of planning and collaboration. The Idaho Federal Flexibility Workgroup met from August through November of last year to identify opportunities to reduce burdens on schools, particularly in areas of funding flexibility and student assessment.

“Thinking about what makes the most sense for our kids and where they want to be, we are requesting several additional flexibilities and are submitting waivers to make common-sense changes to two assessment areas,” said Critchfield. “One would reduce the testing burden on third graders and the other would give high school students more flexibility to choose an assessment aligned with their future goals.”

The proposed assessment waivers include:

- **Third-grade testing:** Federal rules require one standardized English language arts (ELA) test in grade three. Idaho currently administers two: the Idaho Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) and the Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI). The waiver would allow Idaho to use the IRI in place of the ELA portion of the ISAT.

- **Eleventh-grade testing:** Federal requirements also call for a high school assessment. Idaho currently uses the ISAT to meet this requirement. The waiver would allow districts to offer alternatives such as the SAT, career-technical exams, and other approved assessments.

In addition, the Department is exploring applying for Ed-Flex state status. This designation would allow the U.S. Secretary of Education to delegate authority to the state to waive certain statutory or regulatory requirements that may hinder local efforts to improve student outcomes.

“Ultimately, seeking this flexibility is about allowing Idaho to direct our priorities and better support where our students are headed,” Critchfield said. “States have been invited to chart a path toward stronger outcomes, and we are well positioned to strengthen the pathways we already offer while finding solutions that make sense for our communities and our students.”

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